



**26th Annual  
FAMILY LEARNING WEEKEND for  
FAMILIES of DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN  
June 10-12, 2022**

What: MSDB 26th Annual Family Learning Weekend for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Where: MSDB Campus in Great Falls  
When: June 10-12, 2022  
Who: Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children living in Montana!  
Why: IT WILL BE FUN!!

The Learning Weekend is a creative program providing opportunities for families of sensory impaired children to learn about deafness, share their experiences with other families, and learn how to communicate more fully with one another in a warm, caring atmosphere.

The focus of the weekend is to enhance each individual's personal knowledge of deafness and how it relates to the education and development of their child. Informal workshops, group discussions (parent groups, kids' groups, siblings' groups, etc.) and hands-on activities will be offered. Child care and recreation for the children (siblings included) is available at no charge. Families will be reimbursed for mileage at the current state rate.

Housing is provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each family is generally provided with their own suite of rooms in the cottages and efforts are made to make assignments according to individual needs and preferences. Typically each family has their own bathroom, sometimes two, depending on the size of the family. Participants need to bring personal items such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste.

**Children's Programs:**

The children are divided into groups based mostly on age. Many factors are taken into consideration including friendships, maturity level, and interests when putting together the groups. The children stay with their groups until they join the parents for mealtime. MSDB's finest residential and school staff will be responsible for supervising your children and making sure they enjoy the day as much as you do!

**Birth to 2 years:** Children will be in the Preschool Room in Bitterroot with staff. Parents should pick up their children prior to lunch and dinner and return them to the same location when they are done eating.

**3-5 years old:** Children will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. These activities will include snacks, program practice, indoor and outdoor activities including a trip to the MSDB playground (weather permitting). The activities for this group will remain flexible depending on the ages and abilities of the participants.

**6-18 years old:** Saturday morning after the group picture, children will re-join their assigned teams which are designed for children to be involved with peers. There will be several activities including programs, recreation and snacks. In addition, a representative from the Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) will have fun projects for the children to enjoy. MTAP will talk about technology, including using a VP, the Video Relay Service, etc. Also during the morning session MSDB Counselors will meet with hearing siblings providing them an opportunity to discuss their feelings regarding having a deaf sibling. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children will meet separately to share their thoughts as well. This information (while names confidential) will be shared with the parents during the Sunday morning presentation.

\*\*\*The kids program is intended to provide entertainment and educational activities that will further the participants' understanding of deafness and its impact on the family. Activities are designed for youth with hearing loss and for their siblings. Participants are grouped by age, and staff are assigned accordingly, depending on the numbers of the participants and their individual needs. If you have unique concerns regarding your child, please let us know, and we will work with you to ensure that everyone has a good time.

Information from various presenters will be available throughout the weekend.

### **Presenter Bios**

**(not all bios were available at press time)**

**Sheri Cook**, a deaf woman who presented at MSDB several years ago is brought back at the request of parents and educators. Her approach to making language a part of life is fun and inspiring. She uses story telling with important facts. She currently resides in Illinois. Sheri joined us when she was the director of Gallaudet University Regional Center for the Midwest at John A. Logan College. We are excited to have Sheri join us again and this years will not only be presenting but will do a hands on workshop with families and their child Sunday morning.

**John Fechter**, a volunteer for more than twenty years, John currently serves as board president for Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC.) He also served as president of Metro Deaf School (MN) Board. At Hamilton Relay, John is responsible for directing outreach personnel and managing activities to ensure that all state outreach is carried out according to specific objectives. He works with outreach staff to ensure effective communication with relay users on new development and service enhancements in each of their states. A graduate of Gallaudet University, John resides near Minneapolis, MN and has two children who are both deaf. They are currently students at Gallaudet University, majoring in Social Work and Elementary Education. John has been to all 50 states and enjoys traveling. His daughter Kelsey will be joining him during this presentation.

**Pamela C. Snedigar, MPA** Is currently the Director of the Gallaudet University Regional Center –West (GURC-West) at Ohlone College in Fremont, CA. She is a lifelong resident of the Bay Area, where her deaf parents settled. Pam received her B.S., Paralegal Certificate and her Masters in Public Administration from California State University Hayward. She was a paralegal at the California Center for Law and the Deaf (CalCLAD) for 10 years; in that capacity she provided direct services, legislative review, advocacy training and community education. Her interests and current position at GURC-West, have led her to develop many training and continuing education opportunities for professionals and families in the Western United States. She has chaired or been on core planning committees for a number of state-wide, regional and national conferences, including the California Educators of the Deaf Conference, Western Symposium on Deafness, National Asian Deaf Congress Conference, Intermountain Special Studies Institute, Children of Deaf Adults Conference and the American Sign Language Roundtable. She has also been involved with parent outreach through partnerships with programs available in the states of Montana and Washington DC.

## Deaf Learning Weekend 2022 Schedule

(subject to change)

### Friday, June 10, 2022

- 4:00-6:00 Check in: Yellowstone Cottage. Room Assignments and Family Picture
- 5:00-5:25 Tour: Especially helpful for first time attendees. Meet in the Yellowstone Lobby.
- 5:30-6:20 Dinner: Pizza, salad and dessert in the MSDB main dining room.
- 6:30-6:50 Welcome: Parents and children in the Mustang Center (Gym).  
All children (except the White Team) will remain in the Mustang Center. Parents will go to Bitterroot.
- 6:50-7:00 Introduction: (IMC)
- 7:00-7:40 Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP)
- 7:40-8:30 Successful Deaf Adult Panel: Pre-selected adults will share their journey.  
This is a very powerful session for the audience as well as the panel members!
- 8:30 Pick up your kids from the Mustang Center

### Saturday, June 11, 2022

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in the main dining room.
- 8:45-9:00 Group Picture
- 9:00-10:30 Session 1: Sheri Cook - Family Engagement  
This workshop introduces parents to the importance of encouraging children to grab opportunities in order to grow. Helps parents recognize their role in promoting personal and professional growth in their child. Identifies ways parents can help starting early.
- 10:30-10:45 Break
- 10:45-11:45 Session 2: John Fechter & Kelsey with Hamilton Relay. Father and Daughter Sharing their Deaf Journeys.
- 11:45-12:45 Lunch in the Dining Room
- 12:45-1:05 Kid's Program - Mustang Center (Gym)
- 1:05-1:10 Parents back to the IMC
- 1:15-2:10 Breakout Session #1 (Pick one)
- MT Empowerment
  - ASL 1 or ASL 2 with MT Deaf Mentors
  - A Parent's Guide to Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome with Kathy Johnson
  - MSDB Leap Program
  - LSL (Listening and Spoken Language) Topics with Kitty Griffin
- 2:15-3:10 Breakout Session #2 (Pick one)

- MT Empowerment
- ASL 1 or ASL 2 with MT Deaf Mentors
- Darrel Hannum with VRBS for deafblind
- MSDB Leap Program
- LSL (Listening and Spoken Language) Topics with Kitty Griffin

- 3:15-4:30 FAMILY GROUPS
- Mom's Group - location to be determined
  - Dad's Group – location to be determined
  - Grandparent (other caregiver) Group - (if enough interested)- location TBD
- 4:30-6:00 Pick up your children and enjoy Family Time
- 6:00-7:00 BBQ: Dinner in the main dining room
- 7:00-7:30 What's New at MSDB? Superintendent Paul Furthmyre and Vice Principal Julie Dee Alt
- 7:30-8:30 Parent Panel – This is always a very popular session. - IMC
- 8:30 Pick up your kids at cottages (watching movies and eating snacks)

### **Sunday, June 12, 2022**

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in main the Dining Room
- 9:00-10:30 Transition Services for Elementary-Highschool (children will participate with parents) presented by Shawn Tulloch
- 9:00-10:30 Family Play for birth to Kindergarten - Families and children will engage in play, by Sheri Cook
- 10:30-11:00 Evaluations & Wrap-Up
- 11:30 Pick up Grab & Go Lunches. Everyone should be on their way! Have a Safe and Wonderful Summer!

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#### **WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MSDB's FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS!**

"I think every family with a deaf child should come to at least one to see if it's helpful to them – we love it and learn each and every time we come to MSDB!"

"I like that my brother feels welcome and fits in every time he is here and I support him."

"I was very impressed with MSDB in general. I had no idea that this was such a 'gem'. Montana is very lucky."

"Informative, we met a lot of amazing families, the staff was great and the kids had fun"

"Seeing all the kids together is the best part! We always learn something new that helps us with our lives!"

"The staff are great, always different options for presenters – changes every year"

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